

Waste Reduction Goal Task Force
BRIEFING PAPER
For
Recycling vs. Diversion

Background:

In 1989, there were 79 publicly owned municipal solid waste (MSW) landfills in Tennessee, three publicly owned incinerators, and 17 privately owned MSW landfills. Eight-two Tennessee counties possessed a sanitary landfill. In FY 06-07, there were only 34 permitted Class I (sanitary) landfills in Tennessee; 19 were publicly owned. There are 80 Class III/IV (construction & demolition) landfills used by 57 counties. Forty-four of the Class III/IV landfills are county-owned. Approximately 1,477,080 tons of materials were diverted to Class III/IV landfills in 2005 and 2,014,209 tons were diverted to Class III/IV landfills in 2006. C&D material is taken to Class III/IV landfills by construction businesses and local governments as well as by the public. In 2006, 3,569,787 tons of materials were recycled. This included metals, paper, cardboard, glass, latex paint, plastic, textiles, pallets, tires, automotive fluids, electronics, sewage sludge, compost, and alternate daily cover.

A few years ago before the Titans' stadium was constructed, the area had to be cleared of buildings that were on the site. A recycling company in Nashville was allowed to take anything salvageable which included concrete, rebar, wood waste, wiring, and metal scrap. Recent studies at four sites in Tennessee support the viability of diverting waste materials at construction sites. The studies were conducted in Memphis, Clarksville, Maryville, and Bristol. At each site, the builder accumulated waste materials in separate piles (concrete, brick, wood scrap, etc). Packer Industries, Inc., an Atlanta-based manufacturer, then visited each site and ground the waste with the Packer 750, a diesel-powered, trailer-mounted rotary grinder. Packer then demonstrated how each material could be used on-site in a beneficial way, such as wood waste being used as mulch for the lawn and concrete scrap being used for the driveway.

Tennessee gains by preserving lands that would otherwise be needed for landfill expansion. Builders gain by reducing their landfill charges, avoiding purchases of fill material, mulch, and soil preparation material, and being recognized in the community as builders who care about the environment.

To indicate progress in recycling and diversion: in 1989, the tons per capita for Tennessee were 1.54; in 2006, the tons per capita for Tennessee were 1.12. While this decrease is good, much more could be done by Tennessee to promote, legislate, and regulate recycling and diversion. While there are no specific requirements for diversion, most counties and some of the businesses in those counties practice diversion to a certain extent. Industries and businesses have finally begun to recognize the benefits, mainly financial, of recycling and diversion.

Diversion:

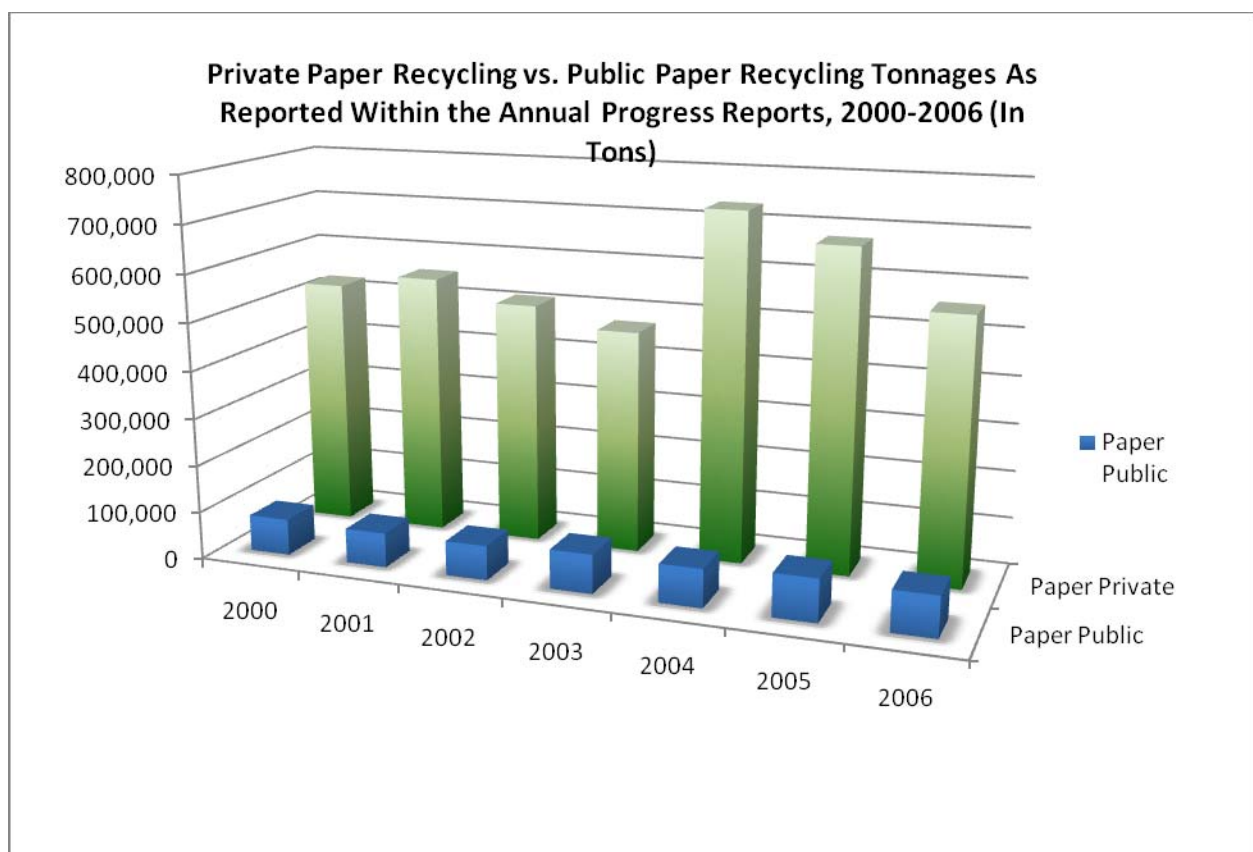
Diverting waste from Class I landfills involves relocating the waste to another type of landfill (i.e., a Class III/IV for construction/demolition waste), reusing the waste material again for its original purpose, converting the waste into energy for commercial and industrial use, or recycling the waste into a new product.

Recycling:

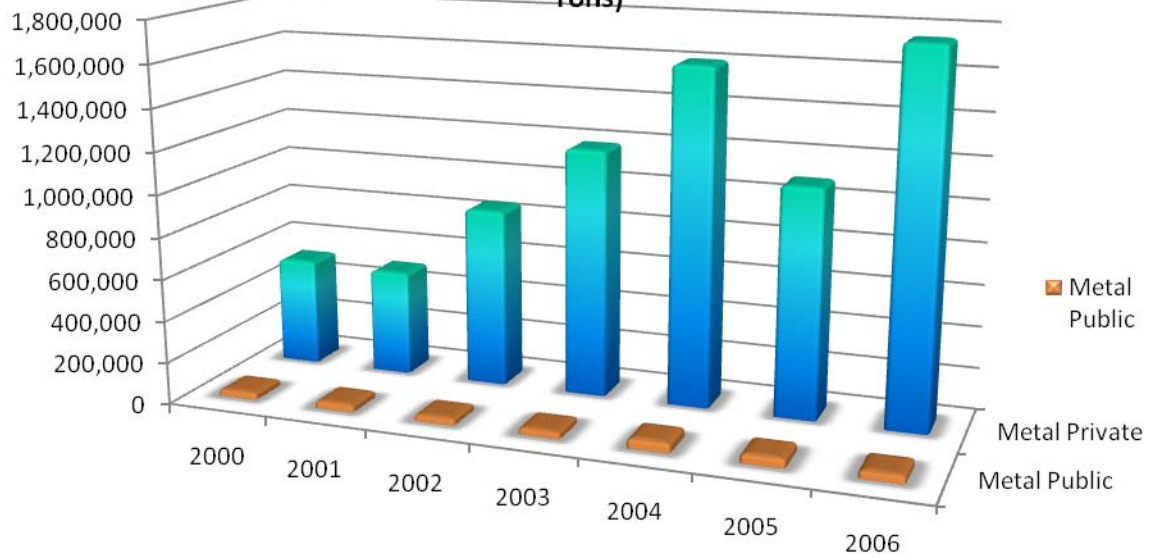
Recycling is a form of diversion and is normally thought of as the preferred method for diverting solid waste. It is a technique or process utilized to separate, process, modify, convert, treat, or otherwise prepare solid waste so that component materials or substances may be beneficially used or re-used as products, raw materials, or energy sources. Examples would include: re-manufacturing plastic soda bottles to make carpeting; burning waste tires for energy in the manufacture of cement; turning post-consumer glass bottles or aluminum cans into new containers; re-manufacturing newsprint and corrugated into new paper products; etc.

Recycling is evolving into a very large, sophisticated industry. There are methods being developed for recycling or reusing just about every material known to man and it behooves every person in every community to take advantage of this opportunity to help preserve our landfills and protect our natural resources.

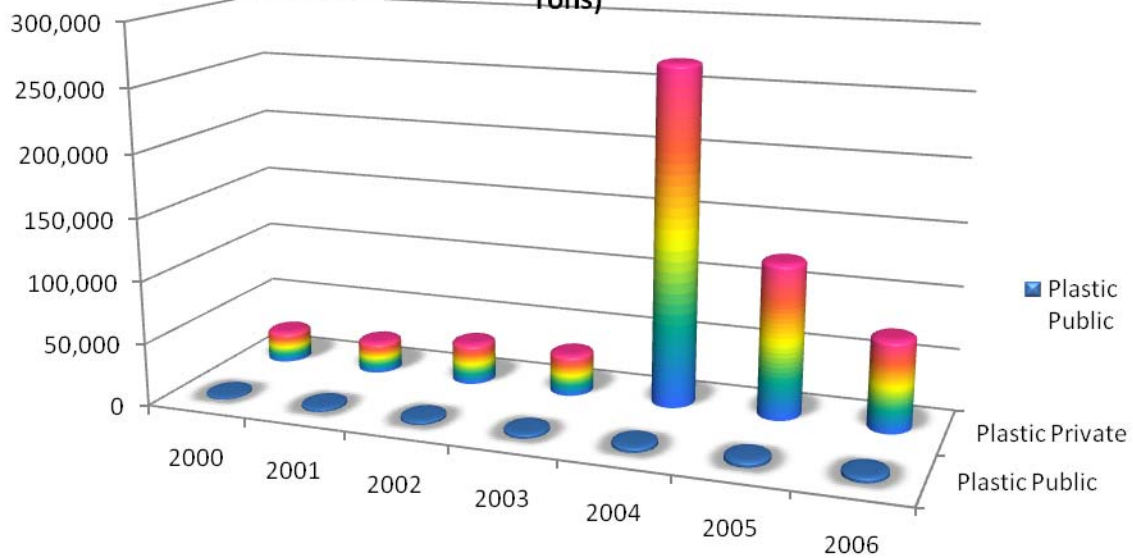
The following are examples of public vs. private recycling over the past seven years.



Private Metal Recycling vs. Public Metal Recycling Tonnages As Reported Within the Annual Progress Reports, 2000-2006 (In Tons)



Private Plastic Recycling vs. Public Plastic Recycling Tonnages As Reported Within the Annual Progress Reports, 2000-2006 (In Tons)



Some trashy facts:

The U.S. produces half of the world's garbage, but has only 6% of the world's people! In the U.S., each person generates about 4.3 pounds of trash a day. That's 6278 pounds for a family of four or, more than three tons of trash each year!

What does an average family throw away?

- 35% is packaging and containers. That's over a ton a year that we have to throw away just to get to the thing we bought!
- 27% is what we call 'nondurable goods', things we use once and throw away, like disposable diapers, paper towels, magazines and newspapers. Each family throws out 10 pounds of paper every week! Think how much you'd save just by using both sides of your printer paper before you toss it out!
- 15% is durable goods: things that are meant to last a long time, from big things, like cars, refrigerators, and last year's computer, to tiny ones, like batteries. That's half a ton every year, just because we got bored with our old toys or couldn't be bothered to fix them!
- 14% (Another half ton) is yard trimmings, which should go right back in the yard as mulch!
- 8% is food waste. That's 10-15 pounds a week! Think how many meals that could provide!

Issues:

To Be Determined By Task Force

Focus Questions:

1. Should construction wastes be included in any waste reduction goal calculation?
2. Should the state provide funding to assist local efforts in waste reduction of construction wastes?
3. How should this funding be provided and from what source – grants, loans?
4. Should construction wastes be banned by local governments from Class I landfills or certain limits placed on construction companies?
5. Is a waste reduction goal necessary? If so, should there be incentives for achieving the goal?
6. Does the state need a goal (waste reduction versus recycling)? If so, should this be a statewide goal only (not calculated on a region by region basis)?

